

Wayne Allard

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ALLARD INTRODUCES MILITARY VOTER BILL BILL WILL IMPROVE VOTING STANDARDS FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO) introduced legislation to enhance the voting ability of absentee military voters. Allard's bill, The Military Voter Support Act, will strengthen their ability to vote by addressing many of the problems which currently impede their ability to cast a vote or have that vote counted.

"We owe it to our service men and women and their dependants and spouses to ensure that they too can enjoy the rights and freedoms they dedicate their lives to protecting," Allard said. "I am introducing this legislation to help ensure that our men in women in uniform do not have their right to vote questioned or even compromised while they are serving our country."

The Military Voter Support Act would help ensure that technical faults beyond the control of the voter would not endanger the legitimacy of their ballot. In addition, it would improve voting ability by revising residency statutes and allowing polling places to be operated on military installations. The bill also calls for a demonstration program for an electronic voting program and makes states more accountable for improving the voting ability of its absentee voters. Allard's bill is co-sponsored by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) and applies to service members and their spouse and voting age dependents who are necessarily absentee with them.

"This bill will help prevent a repeat of the 2000 election where military ballots were unfairly scrutinized in a partisan attempt to silence their voice," Allard added. "I hope this legislation proves to our uniformed voters how we value their service as well as their right to vote."

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Allard's Military Voter Support Act enhances the voting ability of absentee military voters in six key ways:

- Prohibits a state from disqualifying a ballot based upon lack of postmark or witness signature.
- Secures the voting residence of a military voter as they travel on orders.
- Allows polling places to be operated on military installations.
- Allows military voters who are discharged and move before an election but after the residency deadline to use the proper discharge forms as a residency waiver and vote in person at their new polling site.
- Calls for a demonstration program during the 2002 elections of a possible electronic voting system for the 2004 elections.
- Requires states to report to the Secretary of Defense on the Pentagon Federal Voting Assistance Program recommendations on ways to improve the voting ability of absentee voters by state statute changes.

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